

## The Strongest

### Chapter 93 - Dark Clown

The spiral staircase led directly to the core control area on the highest floor.

After climbing an unknown number of steps, Shi Feng arrived at a winding corridor that led towards the core area. Ancient magical runes were carved into the walls on both sides of the corridor, and even though almost a millennium had passed, this corridor was still gleaming with light. Only some parts of the corridor had decayed, damaging the magical circuits etched in it and plunging those particular areas into darkness. Fortunately, not many parts of the corridor were badly decayed, so Shi Feng was still able to clearly see the entirety of the long, narrow, and maze-like corridor.

Just after Shi Feng set foot into the corridor, the alarm once again rang out.

“Alert! Alert! The intruder has already invaded Area A of the fortress, the Magic Corridor. Activating Guardian Statues on duty!”

Shi Feng then heard loud booming noises coming from the corridor, as if some gigantic machine had started moving.

Shi Feng no longer dared advance slowly. He immediately used a Speed Scroll, dashing through the Magic Corridor at flying speed.

After taking several turns in the Magic Corridor, Shi Feng discovered a machine that had a flashing red light. Although this machine was just the size of a football, it was constantly producing alarms, as if it were a tool meant for guiding the Guardian Statues.

[Sentinel Guard] (Common Monster)

Level 10

HP 200/200

Shi Feng immediately understood how he was so easily discovered. This Sentinel Guard was just like a radar. It could detect enemies within a range of 500 yards, and after discovering them, it would set off an alarm. The distance between the entrance of the corridor and this location was roughly around 500 yards, so the Sentinel Guard was able to immediately discover Shi Feng. As long as Shi Feng could get rid of it, then he would be able to rid himself of the alarms of this area.

However, this thing had very sensitive reactions. It would not let any enemies get within 30 yards. Also, if it were attacked even once, it would try to retreat with all its might. Simultaneously, it would increase its speed of calling for its allies, and it would absolutely not give the enemy a second chance to attack. It was extremely hard to deal with.

“I guess I’ve no choice left. I can only give it a try.” Shi Feng unsheathed both of his swords. He could already hear the angry roars of the Guardian Statues coming from behind him. Based on his strength, fighting in this narrow area would only lead to his own death. His only chance of throwing off those Guardian Statues was to get rid of this Sentinel Guard.

When Shi Feng was nearing the 30-yard range, just as the Sentinel Guard was about to break into a run...

Shi Feng’s eyes locked onto the Sentinel Guard, the muscles in both of his arms bulged, and with the strength of his entire body, he cast out both swords.

Xiu! Both swords flew towards the Sentinel Guard.

Precision Throw!

The throwing distance of the skill was just at 30 yards, and it caused 150% of his weapon's damage.

The Sentinel Guard was extremely vigilant. It rapidly moved its body, immediately dodging the Crimson Blade that flew at it. However, the Sentinel Guard's dodge had, in turn, placed it in the flight path of Shi Feng's second sword, the Abyssal Blade.

Peng!

The Abyssal Blade pierced through the Sentinel Guard, causing -211 damage and instantly killing it.

System: Level 10 Sentinel Guard killed. Level difference of 4. EXP obtained increased by 400%. Obtained 800 EXP.

Shi Feng activated Windwalk, his speed once again increasing by a notch as he rushed to pull out his swords that pierced into the ground. He then rushed towards the Magic Corridor's exit. Without the guidance of the Sentinel Guard, the Guardian Statues were like flies that lost their eyes. They ran around all over the place, completely unable to find Shi Feng.

More than a dozen minutes later, after getting rid of another three Sentinel Guards, Shi Feng finally escaped the Magic Corridor, arriving at the control room.

There was a barrier in the central region of the control room. A dark grey colored sphere of iron was placed inside the barrier. This sphere of iron was the heart of the Steel Fortress, and it was the fortress' source of energy. It was the Titan's Heart.

"I never thought that, after so many years have passed, there would still be somebody who would come to this place."

Before Shi Feng could examine the entire control room in detail, he heard a deep sneer coming from the entrance of the barrier. This sound was bone-chilling, and no human was capable of producing such a sound. Only a puppet or a corpse would be capable of sounding so emotionless.

"Welcome to my Steel Fortress Barrutia! In order to celebrate your arrival, I've decided to use your fiery flesh and blood to feed my baby! Come out, Hellhound!"

Shi Feng could faintly see the outline of a humanoid lifeform inside the barrier. However, the figure seemed to be currently absorbing the energy of the Titan's Heart, so it did not have surplus powers to deal with Shi Feng, sending out its pet in its stead.

"Ao! Ao! Ao!" A large black dog, its entire body covered in flames, rushed out from the barrier.

[Hellhound] (Elite-rank)

Level 15

HP 6,000/6,000

“Crap, did I come at a bad time?” Shi Feng’s brows slightly wrinkled as he observed the Hellhound. According to the information in his previous life, there were definitely no lifeforms or monsters in this place. The person that did the Quest was able to safely take the Titan’s Heart away. So, why was it that, when it was his turn to do the Quest, a mysterious character appeared here, trying to steal the Titan’s Heart’s energy.

However, Shi Feng also thought of another possibility.

This mysterious character stole all the energy of the Titan’s Heart first. Meanwhile, the player who came here had merely taken away the Titan’s Heart that was empty of any energy. On the other hand, Shi Feng had coincidentally run into this energy thief. However, unfortunately for Shi Feng, he wasn’t even capable of defeating the pet of this mysterious character, not to mention the person, itself.

“Since you want to battle, then come!” Shi Feng pulled out his swords, his attention affixed on the slowly approaching Hellhound.

As the Hellhound’s distance from him continuously shortened, Shi Feng could feel his surroundings become exceptionally hot, causing his mouth to feel parched. Shi Feng thought of taking out a Cold Beverage to enjoy, but he currently couldn’t carelessly move about. He would immediately reveal a weak point as soon as he moved. As a Level 15 Elite monster, the Hellhound’s intelligence was already extremely high. It was the reason why it leisurely walked towards Shi Feng.

That was because the Hellhound knew the best time for it to launch an attack. As long as Shi Feng revealed a gap, it would immediately bite at him with all its might, not letting go of Shi Feng until he was completely dead.

In the confrontation between the two, after all was said and done, the Hellhound was still the more powerful. So, naturally, it would not simply wait. Its legs immediately pushed against the ground, leaping high into the air and transforming into a ball of fire. It then opened its flaming maw.

Shi Feng rolled to a side, dodging the Hellhound's pouncing attack.

However, immediately after the Hellhound landed, its flaming claws slashed horizontally.

Shi Feng had long since prepared for this, so he used both of his swords to Parry.

Peng! Although Shi Feng did not receive any damage, his entire body was thrown.

The Hellhound immediately opened its large mouth, spewing scorching-hot flames. The flames wrapped around Shi Feng completely, preventing him from escaping.

Shi Feng clenched his teeth. He used Phantom Kill, and at the moment of imminent peril, he swapped positions with his doppelganger in mid-air.

Shi Feng's doppelganger was immediately swallowed by the flames, instantly turning into a pile of ash. Meanwhile, the System Notification showed a damage of up to -3,000. Even if Shi Feng were to take the hit with his HP full and all of his Life Shield[1] activated, he still wouldn't be able to shoulder this attack.

Shi Feng clearly felt how powerful the Hellhound was. Such damage was definitely not something a Level 15 Elite monster could dish out. Its strength was greatly increased because of the Quest's Story Line.

According to his experience, Shi Feng estimated the Hellhound's actual level to be over Level 30, and it should be a Lord-rank Boss.

If the pet were already this powerful, then what about its owner?

Seeing that the Hellhound's flaming claws were about to slap down at him, Shi Feng used Abyssal Bind. Even if the Hellhound were any stronger, it would still be restricted for 3 seconds. Following which, Shi Feng rushed into the barrier at the center of the room. Currently, the best option Shi Feng possessed was to snatch the Titan's Heart and swiftly depart.

However, just after entering the barrier, Shi Feng immediately became shocked upon seeing this mysterious person's true identity.

"Dark Clown!" Shi Feng immediately recognized the identity of this mysterious character. His heart could not help but be surprised, "Why is such a bastard here?"

TL Notes:

[1]Life Shield: Effect 2 of the Silvermoon Set Equipment (mentioned in Chapter 81)

Chapter 94 - Titan's Heart

Although Shi Feng was shocked, his feet never stopped moving. His figure turned into an after image as he rushed towards the Titan's Heart, located at the center of the barrier. He then used Observing Eyes on the Dark Clown.

"Unknown?" Shi Feng was shocked.

Aside from the information showing that the figure was indeed a Dark Clown, there was nothing else displayed. All of it was just question marks.

There were only two possibilities for such a situation to occur. The first was that the Dark Clown was equipping an advanced camouflage item. The other was that its strength was simply too overwhelming, preventing the basic Observing Eyes from identifying it.

It was very clearly the latter situation taking place in this case.

According to Shi Feng's memories, Dark Clowns were a group of mysterious lifeforms. They always wore clown clothing with many bells as decorations. They looked human, but were not human. However, neither were they living spirits. Each one of them was extremely powerful. They could simply appear at any location, and they could come and go without leaving behind a single trace. Even if it was the Palace of Star-Moon Kingdom, they could still easily enter it.

However, this was but a small matter. Shi Feng had previously seen a Tier 3 Great Druid NPC die at the hands of the Dark Clowns. Their methods of attacking were simply unforgettable. The attacks were impossible to avoid.

"Despicable human, you actually dare barge into this place?!" The Dark Clown had its face wrapped in a black cloth, revealing only its two glowing red eyes. Although its enraged expression could not be seen, its tone was extremely agitated.



Streak after streak of green colored energy was currently being absorbed by the Dark Clown. Clearly it was a crucial moment, so it was unable to take action against Shi Feng.

This situation gave Shi Feng a chance to prevent this assimilation ceremony, and deal heavy damage to the Dark Clown. Otherwise, when this critical period passed, the Dark Clown, which was capable of killing even a Tier 3 Great Druid, would instantly kill Shi Feng with just a wave of its hand.

“Cyber, get rid of him for me!” the Dark Clown urged.

Shi Feng revealed a faint smile. Seeing the Dark Clown’s anxious appearance, Shi Feng tried even harder to deal some damage against it. As for the Hellhound behind him, it was still restricted by chains. It was too late, even if it tried to rush over to Shi Feng.

Chop!

Shi Feng used all of his strength. With the flick of his wrist, a large explosion sounded out. The Abyssal Blade turned into a streak of black light, piercing directly towards the Magic Circle that was absorbing energy from the Titan’s Heart.

铛！

Dang!

The Magic Weapon Abyssal Blade, which had been successful in every previous endeavor, was blocked outside of the Magic Array. It created brilliant white sparks as it collided with the Magic Array, dealing no damage at all to the Absorption Magic Array.

“Pitiful human. Did you think a weak little Swordsman like you could destroy my Magic Array? Just give up and become Cyber’s food! Who knows, I might even let your soul go. Otherwise, prepare for endless pain after you die!” the Dark Clown threatened.

At this moment, the Hellhound rushed over.

“You’re just a clown, yet you dare spout nonsense! Did you think I have no ways to deal with you?” Shi Feng sneered. He took out a dark, gray-colored Magic Scroll from his bag.

“No!”

“You’re literally insane! Do you know what you are trying to do!?”

The Dark Clown abruptly yelled out in shock after seeing this piece of dark, gray-colored Magic Scroll.

“It seems you know your stuff. At worst, we’ll both die together.” Shi Feng did not wish to use this item either, however, he was going to die anyway, so why should he still care? He then unfolded the Magic Scroll, and his mouth started chanting the activation incantation.

This was one of the only three Tier 2 Magic Scrolls that Shi Feng possessed: Obliterating Torrent. It possessed the ability to devour all magic elements, turning them into nothingness. This Magic Scroll belonged to the peak of Tier 2 Magic Scrolls.

Suddenly, the magic elements in the center of the barrier surged, becoming incomparably violent, following which, it started collapsing without any signs of stopping.

The Absorption Magic Array was made up of magic elements, so, naturally, it could not escape its fate as it collapsed and exploded.

The entire Magic Array was similar to frying beans, producing crackling sounds. The Magic Array loudly exploded, dispersing streak after streak of dazzling shockwaves.

Shi Feng immediately activated Defensive Blade, becoming immune to the damage of six ranged attacks. He then rushed towards the Titan's Heart.

However, it was not easy to collect the Titan's Heart. Shi Feng either had to deplete all the energy the Titan's Heart possessed, or he would need to have the key to remove the barrier. Fortunately, Shi Feng had the key. In the midst of the explosions, Shi Feng unlocked the barrier protecting the Titan's Heart, then stored it in his bag.

The shockwaves created by the Obliterating Torrent sent the Hellhound flying away, violently slamming it into a wall. The wall then split apart like a spiderweb. Following which, the Hellhound heavily landed on the ground, and didn't stand back up.

However, the shockwaves of the explosion did no harm to the Dark Clown, as if they had just passed through its body. The Dark Clown's body seemed as though it did not exist in this plane of existence. However, the backlash from the magic ceremony failing had caused great damage to it. The Dark Clown silently glared at Shi Feng, faintly having the intention to take action.

“Humph! Come if you have the ability!” Shi Feng smiled in disdain as he took out another deep-blue colored Tier 2 Magic Scroll.

Shi Feng had already obtained the Titan’s Heart. Even if he died, a Quest Item could not be dropped. The Dark Clown was already extremely weakened as well, and at most, it would only be slightly stronger than him. Shi Feng still had two pieces of Tier 2 Magic Scrolls. At worst, he would perish together with the Dark Clown.

He could still revive after dying, but if the Dark Clown died, then it would truly be dead.

Let’s see who’s afraid of who!

“Despicable human, I’ll let you off this time! We will meet again sooner or later. It will be your death when that time comes!” The Dark Clown gave up the notion of getting rid of Shi Feng after seeing the Magic Scroll. It only left behind a ruthless remark as it disappeared from the control room, together with the Hellhound.

Shi Feng silently waited for a moment. After confirming no movements from his surroundings, he let loose a breath of relief. However, he did not store away the Tier 2 Magic Scroll.

He truly did not wish to use the Tier 2 Magic Scroll and perish together with the Dark Clown. However, based on the Dark Clown’s intelligence, it too would make the right choice.

Shi Feng had already obtained the Titan’s Heart. He took out a Return Scroll and started chanting.

Thirty seconds later Shi Feng turned into a white glow, disappearing from the control room as well.

After Shi Feng disappeared, the Dark Clown appeared once more. The red glow let out from its eyes became even more brilliant now. It clearly did not expect Shi Feng to be so cautious. From beginning to end, Shi Feng had never put away the Tier 2 Magic Scroll. Otherwise, it would have had a chance to kill Shi Feng.

“Wretched human! The method I’ve spent more than ten years researching to absorb the energy from the Titan’s Heart...! When I recover, I will definitely make you wish for death!” the Dark Clown bellowed. It abruptly waved its hand, and tens of flying blades destroyed the pedestal, which lost the protection of the barrier.

On the other side, Shi Feng had already returned to Red Leaf Town.

Currently, the amount of players in Red Leaf Town grew even greater. The streets were filled with players selling Level 0 to Level 2 Common Equipment and basic skill books.

Shi Feng took a look at his bag. It had been some time since Gold Coins stopped entering his account. He thus decided to go sell some items before going to hand in his Quest.

The previous Forging Designs were already sold out. Shi Feng took out another twenty pieces of Glimmer Chestplate Forging Designs and placed them at the Auction House to be sold in batches.

At this time, a communication request came from Gentle Snow.

“Three hours from now, meet up in front of Dark Moon Graveyard’s entrance. Get your team prepared for it and bring the necessary potions. Our Ouroboros must definitely snatch the First Clear of this Dungeon this time, so we’ll be looking forward to your performance,” Gentle Snow’s tone was very indifferent, as if she was giving out a command. It was completely different from their meeting just now.

“Will do. I’ll definitely arrive three hours from now.” However, Shi Feng did not particularly mind it, as that was the Snow Goddess’s regular attitude. He estimated the time, thinking that he should be able to make it.

Neither of them traded unnecessary words, immediately disconnecting the call.

After that, Shi Feng purchased Card Sets and Hard Stones at the Auction House. He also bought some materials required to make Bronze Equipment and Mysterious-Iron Equipment. After storing the materials inside the bank, Shi Feng went on to buy some Magic Scrolls and necessary potions. He then ran towards the White Sand Ruins to turn in his Quest.